

\$6.75

THE
GREAT MANSFIELD FAIR
With Related
MANSFIELD HISTORY
1852 - 1956

"Come To The Fair"

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GREAT MANSFIELD FAIR
With Related
MANSFIELD HISTORY
1852 - 1956



Published By
CHESTER P. BAILEY
MANSFIELD, PA



1922

This book is dedicated
to my wife Mary
whose support and help
have made this book possible.

Other books by the author
TIOGA MOUNTAINEERS
Company B
101st Regiment Pennsylvania Volunteers, Infantry

MANSFIELD MEN IN THE
SEVENTH PENNSYLVANIA CAVALRY
1861 - 1865

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Chester P. Bailey
Mansfield, Pennsylvania

Printed in the U.S.A.
By Montrose Publishing, Montrose, PA

CONTENTS	PAGE
What it's all about - Come See!	5
The Island	6
A Fair?	8
The Founders	11
Incorporation	16
Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical & Industrial Fair	19
Railroad Excursions	24
Borough Council Activities	27
Churches and Other Organizations	30
1889 Flood	33
Free Attractions	37
Editors and Reporters	43
Baseball	46
The Band	51
World War I	53
50th Anniversary	57
World War II	61
Going to the Fair	64
Acknowledgements	70

WHAT IT'S ALL ABOUT - COME SEE

"The factors that have made the Mansfield Fair the most successful and famous of the fairs of the northern tier, have also made Smythe Park, where the fair is held, a synonym for grace and beauty. Years ago it was conceded to be the most beautiful park in the northern section of the state and each successive year the management, ever alert to please the thousands who thronged here in September, have endeavored to beautify and improve both grounds and buildings and to render even more efficient the exhibition of stock and produce.

"Everyone enjoys the annual visit to the fair grounds to see fruit of field and garden, the many industrial exhibits, the fine livestock, the attractions of the midway, and all that goes to make up the annual autumn exhibition. The crowd alone is an attraction, for the county fair is no less than a great annual reunion. Here one sees and greets many friends and acquaintances, who perhaps have not been seen since the fair time of the previous year. The carnival spirit of the throng, the very atmosphere of the bracing autumn days all combine to make the county fair a mecca during one week of the year".

We shall be ever grateful to the men and women who served through the Smythe Park Association to bring the Fair and the park to Mansfield. Today the park still serves the recreational needs of the Mansfield School system, the Pennsylvania National Guards and furnishes the town with a living memorial to the men and women who served in the Armed Forces of the United States, through the Memorial swimming pool.

Smythe Park is now a part of our heritage. This history of the Great Mansfield Fair is an attempt to bring to you a bit of that part of Mansfield's past.

The above, in part, is from an article
written by Charles Redfield, in the
Mansfield Advertiser.

Leeta the Wild Girl - Come See - 1907



THE ISLAND

In trying to determine what actually set the Great Mansfield Fair in motion, no one single factor was found. The Fair grew out of several circumstances.

First there was "The Island". This island like Asa Mann's field became a gathering place and was used by area residents as a picnic grounds. Within a few years after the railroad came through Mansfield, in 1840, it became a great resort for excursionist from all the surrounding towns and villages.

Harry B. Taylor, who came to Mansfield in 1877, wrote in his Memoirs, "Calling the Park an 'Island' was not a misnomer, as there was a cove extending from the river on the southwest and coming around to where the present gates are, and going back into the river on the northwest corner".

The cove was quite noted for "catching bullheads". The present road from the Francis Kelly ball field around past the front gate to the high school parking lot is the approximate location of the river or cove. The Island contained five or six acres of undrained land covered with beautiful and large sycamore, willow, butternut and maple trees. The Island was a portion of the land purchased by Henry G. Smythe, a doctor who came to Mansfield in 1852.

Dr. Smythe had the right qualifications for the young community and soon became involved with the needs of the growing town, allowing his land, "The Island" to be used as a public picnic area before Mansfield became a borough in 1857. By 1858 the use of the Island was common practice.



Calling the Park an Island was not a misnomer. Fair of 1885

The Honorable Simon B. Elliot in an Historical Address delivered at the State Normal School on February 19, 1890, told of the early struggle of the Mansfield Classical Seminary in getting the construction started again after the fire of April 1857. He said the East Genesee Conference of the Methodist Episcopal Church was to meet in Corning, N.Y. the later part of August, 1858, and someone conceived the idea of inviting that body to a grand, free dinner on the 20th of August on what was then termed and known as "The Island".

A free train was secured, a grand dinner provided and people turned out enmasse but only three members of the conference. The locals were aroused to the need and before that day was done four thousand dollars was raised.

The Island in the early 1870's according to Harry B. Taylor had a dance platform in the middle and was used regularly every Saturday night for public dances which were invariably of the square dance type. The horsemen of the town had made a one third mile track around the Island. They all had the fastest horses but none of them was able to go a mile in less than three and a half minutes.



The Park in winter. First band stand, ladies pavilion and grandstand. mid 1880's.

A FAIR?

Fairs were already known to the early settlers of Mansfield, most having an English background. Fairs were started in England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth, 1558-1603, as a means of improving the economy. It served to bring people and their products together, to improve their breeding stock and grains. This offered the opportunity to trade and for the traveling shows of the Shakespeare period to entertain larger groups, thus the entertainment features of the fair were also established.

There was a Tioga County Fair already under way at Wellsboro in 1854. According to John L. Sexton, Jr. of Blossburg, a general historian and publisher of the Tioga County Industrial Register, "the fair had been started at Wellsboro to encourage farming in Tioga County". An organization known as the "Tioga Agriculture Society" was formed in 1854. A fair was held in 1855 and was enjoying a moderate success by 1875 when Professor F. A. Allen of Mansfield addressed the Society. Wellsboro's fair continued into the 1880's.

F. A. Allen came to Mansfield in 1864 as principal of the Mansfield Normal School. He held that position for five years before resigning. He started the Mansfield Soldiers Orphan School in October 1867. His desire was to establish a model school for the State Normal and use seniors from the Normal to teach in the school. Professor Allen returned to the principalship of the State Normal in 1877. He was serving his third year when he died in 1880. The use of the boys from the Orphan School to assist in volunteer work on the new fair grounds is well documented.



An early 1900 scene at Mansfield Fair.

Troy in Bradford County started a fair in 1875. This also had an impact on the people living in Sullivan Township and in other sections of eastern Tioga County. Troy served as a rail center for many of Tioga County soldiers during the Civil War 1861-1865.

Pressure for a fair began to bring some activity by 1875 for an organization called the Mansfield Agricultural Society was formed that year. It contained the following individuals, many of whom appear in the Mansfield Fair activities and organizations. Members were: John W. Bailey, Stephen F. Wilson, A. M. Pitts, J. S. Coles, L. A. Gardner, I. M. Bodine, J. H. Matson, George Gaylord, Abram Young, Franklin Wylie, Victor A. Elliott, Bert Schrader, Philip Williams, V. R. Pratt, Burr R. Bailey, T. H. Bailey.

Many of the individuals were very active and well known educators and business persons. A number were Civil War veterans, among those listed was the first editor of the newly formed Mansfield Advertiser, 1872, Victor A. Elliott. He was later to become a Supreme Court Judge of Colorado. He was the commanding officer of the Tioga Mountaineers in the Civil War. J. S. Coles became publisher.

The early editors of the Mansfield Advertiser at once realized the value of the Mansfield Fair to the community.

In 1877 a Farmers Club was organized in Mansfield, and A. M. Spencer was named president.

On March 22, 1877, the County Council Patrons of Husbandry (P of H) met at Mansfield. The Grange became a strong supporter of the Mansfield Fair.



Stock Barn

A group had been organized in 1876 to determine the possibilities of a fair. Elected to head this group was Charles Ross, president; J. A. Elliott, secretary; and W. H. Husted, treasurer. From this organization came the Smythe Park Association.

"Its object," according to historian John L. Sexton, Jr., "was to improve the Island by clearing it of underbrush, erecting a hall, cottage and suitable stock pens on an eminence adjoining it for a fair grounds, with trotting tracks."

According to the Wellsboro Agitator, Tuesday, August 26, 1879, "The Park building is taking shape, somewhat. The sides are nearly enclosed."

The Mansfield Notes were the last to be submitted by the Mansfield correspondent to the Agitator, signed Mos Quito. He also noted that Mr. E. Munn had fallen from the roof of the Park building. He received several bruises but did not break any bones in the accident.

It was a horse & buggy fair.



THE FOUNDERS

Dr. Henry G. Smythe was born in Canada and came to Tioga County in 1831. He first settled in Covington and was in Mansfield as early as 1838. He purchased the property of Dr. Dexter Parkhurst who had come to Mansfield in 1824, and had built his office near the Smythe Park entrance as we know it today. His home was on the site now occupied by the Gulf gasoline service station. Dr. Parkhurst was the third physician to locate in Mansfield. He was the brother of Joel Parkhurst, an early businessman of Mansfield who later went to Elkland. Dr. Dexter Parkhurst moved to Mainesburg. It is believed he built the house in Mansfield which Dr. Smythe later occupied. Dr. Smythe built two additional houses on south Main Street.

The Smythe family became very active in Mansfield during the 1850's, Terrence Smythe, brother of Dr. H. G. Smythe, built a mill on the west side of the river. The dam and mill race were involved in the development on the west side of the river. Charles F. Swan, John F. Donaldson, Dr. Joseph P. Morris, S. F. Wilson, and William Bache established a pig iron furnace and secured water rights from the Smythes. At one time the Smythes maintained a bridge over the river and mill race near the dam. Dr. Smythe became involved in many of the town's business activities. In December 1850 Isaac Drake died and Dr. Smythe became the administrator of his property along with Daniel Sherwood, John B. Drake and R. P. Buttles. The Drake property of five acres contained 2 houses and barns, a large building used as a woolen factory, and water privileges. Dr. Smythe secured the property for \$1400 being the highest bidder. This property, west of the river, joined the mill property of Terrance Smythe. The deed was dated 1851. Also in 1851 John Parkhurst and Elizabeth Smith sold Henry G. Smythe 30 acres of land including the Island. Part of the land was occupied by the railroad right of way



*Mansfield Mills, Erected 1852.
Burned 1934. 1916 photo*



Home of Dr. Smythe on S. Main St.



Borough School - 1880

along Williamson Road to Wellsboro Street on the north, and west to the river. There was one small lot at the corner of the railroad right of way and Wellsboro Street owned at one time by L. Holden. This was also the site of the plank school house where William C. Ripley taught. Among his pupils was Fordyce A. Allen. A brick house was occupied by the Dorset family on this site later. The purchase made by Dr. Smythe included the office, home of Dr. Parkhurst as well as the Mansfield practice of Dr. Parkhurst. Dr. Smythe came to Mansfield with an established practice among the miners at Blossburg. It is said, he would not hesitate to jump on his horse and answer their call.

In 1852 he sold part of the land west of the river to John Lang of Blossburg. This sale included the Woolen mill and two houses. He reserved rights to the water for the grist mill.

Dr. Smythe, Philip Williams and Andrew Ross purchased a number of lots between Williamson Road, (Main Street) College Avenue and Academy Streets. After Dr. Smythe died, Cordella Smythe, sister of Terrence and Henry settled the estate between the three families.

The Smythes sold five and one-fourth acres of land purchased by Dr. Smythe to the Mansfield Borough School District in March 1879, along Wellsboro Street. A new Borough School building was started that year and finished in 1880. The School Board members were P.T. Van Ness, G. L. Murdough, Henry Allen, Mart King, George D. Meigs, and J. W. Bailey.

Dr. Henry George Smythe died November 10, 1879. His funeral was held on Thursday, November 13, in the St. James Church and was largely attended. Business was generally suspended.

Sometime around 1876 the members of the newly formed Smythe Park Association obtained a contract or lease to use the Island and joining land above the island along Wellsboro Road for conducting a fair.

Dr. Smythe did not believe in gambling and requested that there be no racing on the island track. He had indicated that he would give the Island as a public park.

On May 23, 1877, the following notice appeared in the Mansfield Advertiser.

TRACK ON PARK ESTABLISHED

The track on the "Island" in Mansfield is nearly complete.

The Association states that no racing, nor trotting for money will be permitted, but that it is designated solely for wholesome recreation.

The new track was less than a half mile. It would be made a full half-mile a few years later, as one of the improvements the Association would carry out each year.

The legal ownership of the park and fair grounds was settled on June 26, 1885, when Cordella Smythe deeded to the Smythe Park Association about eleven acres for the sum of \$2400. The deed description included acreage known as "Smythe Park" the same which was contracted or leased by H. G. Smythe to the Association on August 9, 1879, and bequested to the said Association by Henry G. Smythe. The new deed included the land used by the railroad from Main Street crossing to Wellsboro Street, behind the school property to the river.

MART KING

Mart King entered the fair picture in 1875 when the Smythe Park Association was formed. He became largely instrumental in establishing the "Mansfield Fair", making it an annual affair and such a success.

Mart King, the son of George W. King, was born in Washington County, New York in 1825. He came to Mansfield in 1845 at the age of twenty years. He worked two years at blacksmithing and at carpentry for five years. In 1852 he worked on the railroad. He decided to go into business and in 1869 built a factory for the manufacturing of bedsteads. The factory burned one year later and was rebuilt in 1870. The Mart King Factory was located on the west side of the railroad opposite the freight house, on Morris Ave. It had a loading spur running into the factory. In just a few years it became a thriving business in the manufacturing of extension tables, bedroom furniture, and as a specialty, a general line of furniture. The factory burned a second time on July 4, 1884, and was not rebuilt. Mart King also started a steam laundry. An ad in the 1881 Fair Premium list reads: Mart King Steam Furniture Factory and Laundry. Office and Factory near the Tioga Railroad Depot.



Martin Van Buren King 1825 - 1910

Mr. King entered local politics in 1860. He became Burgess, and served five different terms between 1860 and 1875. Between 1860 and 1889 he served as burgess, councilman, borough secretary and Justice of the Peace. He also served as trustee of the Mansfield State Normal School, and a member of the Mansfield Borough School Board. He was Mansfield's outstanding businessman. Mr. King died December 29, 1910.

CHARLES S. ROSS

Charles S. Ross was the son of Andrew J. Ross. A. J. Ross and Philip Williams were associated in the merchantile business, they were also involved with Dr. Smythe in real estate. At the death of his father, Charles Ross joined Philip Williams in the bank which had been started in 1872. Mr. Williams died in 1894 and Mr. Ross continued alone until 1907 when it was reorganized as a National Bank. Mr. Ross retired from the First National Bank in 1931.

Charles S. Ross was the first president of the Fair group and became secretary of the Smythe Park Association. Mr. Ross served longer than any of the founders, in fact he remained active until his retirement. In 1920, he served as President and was still its president in 1924. As I recall he was given an honorary job in the 1930's. The job was to announce the acts of the free attractions. He would use a large megaphone to make sure everyone in the grandstand heard. Mr. Ross died May 13, 1940.

VINE R. PRATT

Vine R. Pratt was principal of the Soldiers Orphan School. He became principal in 1869, a Normal School graduate, Professor Pratt carried on the ideas of Mr. Allen and much progress was made. The school went from 25 girls and 25 boys to over 200 orphans and to much larger facilities. He served as trustee to the Smythe Park Association for several years as did F. A. Allen.

In July of 1879 the Smythe Park Association was formed with a capital stock of not less than \$2500 and arranged the first fair. In November of that year the Association was incorporated with forty-two stock holders holding 117 shares.

Officers named were Mart King, president; Peter Van Ness, vice-president; Charles S. Ross, secretary; Philip Williams, treasurer; Trustees: D. D. Pitts, F. A. Allen, J. S. Middaugh, Preston Schrader, Vine R. Pratt.

The management of the park was the duty of the directors and none were paid except the Secretary and Treasurer. The Secretary job became almost a year round operation in the later years as more facilities and athletic fields were available.

Secretaries of the Association included C. S. Ross, M. V. King, J. A. Elliott, W. A. Pitts, H. R. Hoard, W. P. Austin, Ray Longbothum, F. A. Marvin, and P. W. Farrer.



Beautiful Trees and Flowers



INCORPORATION

Articles of Incorporation of the Smythe Park Association. November 28, 1879

It is agreed by and between the undersigned citizens of the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania that they do associate themselves together under the name and style of the Smythe Park Association for the purpose of buying, owning and fitting a proper and suitable lot of land, with the necessary improvements therein, for holding fairs, picnics and other public assemblies, at Mansfield, Pennsylvania, under the following rules and regulations, to wit:

1. The name of the corporation shall be the Smythe Park Association.
2. The corporation shall be formed to encourage and promote Agricultural pursuits, and provide a "Public Park".
3. The place where the business of the association shall be transacted is Mansfield Tioga County, Pennsylvania.
4. The term for which the corporation is to exist is perpetual.
5. The name and residences of the subscribers and the number of shares subscribed by each are:

Mart King, Mansfield, Tioga County, Pa. -4.

(All were listed as above.)

Charles S. Ross	-4	D. H. Pitts	-4	I. W. Adams	-4
V. R. Pratt	-4	B. Shrader	-4	B. Shader	-4
B. R. Bailey	-4	M. L. Clark	-4	R. R. Kingsley & Son	-4
T. H. Bailey	-4	G. C. Howe	-4	Kobler & Cokle	-4
A. M. Pitts	-4	T. F. Rolason	-4	R. L. Wilson	-2
C. V. Elliott	-4	Philip Williams	-4	B. A. Elliott	-2
T. G. Elliott	-2	J. L. Murdough	-4	H. Hodges	-2
E. E. Webster	-2	T. M. Allen	-4	L. A. Ridgeway	-1
H. Kingsley	-2	F. A. Allen	-4	A. R. Decker	-1
E. G. Gilbert	-2	F.A. Allen & Co	-4	S. Sweet	-1
G. A. Gaylord	-2	P. V. VanNess	-2	C. H. Howe	-1
D. A. Butts	-2	C. E. Allen	-2	B. C. Bailey	-1
R. E. Olney	-2	Gillett Welch & Co	-2	E. A. Fuller	-1
E. R. Backer	-2	John Argetsinger	-2		

6. Any ten members of the Association shall constitute a quorum and the officers of the Association shall consist of a President; Vice-President Secretary, and Treasurer, five trustees.
7. The President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer shall perform the duties usually devolving on those officers and for the first year are as follows:
 President - Mart King, Mansfield, Tioga County, Penna.
 Vice President - P. V. VanNess, Mansfield, Tioga Co. Pa.
 Secretary - C. S. Ross, Mansfield, Tioga County, Penna.
 Treasurer - Philip Williams, Mansfield, Tioga Co. Pa.
 Trustees: D. W. Pitts, F. A. Allen, J. L. Murdough, Burt Shrader, V. R. Pratt.
8. The trustees shall have full charge of said Park, or grounds and shall make such improvements as they shall deem necessary subject to direction

by majority vote of the members of the Association at a meeting called for that purpose and the President shall call a meeting upon the petition of five members and the President shall notify all members by mailing to each an announcement of said meeting at least three days before the time of meeting.

9. The amount of Capital Stock of the Association shall be not less than twenty-five hundred dollars and shall be divided into shares of twenty-five dollars each, and each shall entitle its holder to one vote.
10. Assessments shall be made upon the Capital stock from time to time as the Association by majority vote shall direct to defray expenses and make necessary improvements. Provided that the assessment for any one year shall not exceed twenty-five percentum of Capital stock except in case of the purchase of land, and in no case to exceed the amount subscribed.
11. The annual meeting of the stockholders of the Association shall be held on the last Monday of July at which meeting the officers for the ensuing year shall be elected by ballot.
12. These terms and regulations shall not be changed except by a two-thirds vote of the stockholders at a meeting of the Association to be called by the President as herein before specified.



Flowers in front of Main building. Stock barn in background.

Signed by: T. F. Rolason, E. A. Fuller, L. A. Ridgeway,
T. G. Elliott, B. R. Bailey, C. E. Allen,
D. W. Pitts, B. Shrader

(The above is an exact copy of the Articles of Incorporation.)

It became the duty of J. W. Adams, J. G. Elliott and Burton Shader, three of the subscribing members of the Smythe Park Association, to record the articles of incorporation in the office of County Recorder, County Courthouse, Wellsboro, along with proof of publication from John L. Sexton, Jr., editor and publisher of the Industrial Register, a weekly newspaper published at Blossburg, Tioga County, Pa. and W. A. Rowland, editor and publisher of the Mansfield Advertiser, Mansfield, Tioga County, Pa. The date - December 9, 1879.

The subscribers paid \$25.00 a share and received their stock in 1885.



High Wire Act - 1890

TIOGA COUNTY AGRICULTURAL, MECHANICAL and INDUSTRIAL FAIR

The Island was cleaned of dead branches, and the lawns made ready during the summer in preparation for the first fair. The boys from the Orphans school helped, along with the people from town and the subscribers to the Park Association. The park was officially opened to the public in July, 1879. Citizens and veterans of 1812 and the Civil War celebrated the Fourth of July in the new public park for the first time.

The main entrance was from Wellsboro Street. A road ran parallel to the railroad onto the grounds. The fair grounds in addition to the island included the hill behind the site of the new brick school to the river. The public school building was finished in 1880. A new railroad siding with cattle pens were built just north of Wellsboro Street.

Ten thousand dollars had been expended. A main exhibition building was built, an office, dining room, hardware building, band stand and 300 horse and cattle stalls in open sheds with walks and drives.

The first "Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair" opened its gates at 8:00 A.M. for a three day Fair, Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, October 1, 2, and 3, 1879.

This first Fair was termed a great success with thousands attending. Sixteen carloads of stock and equipment came from New York State. Five thousand people attended on October 2nd. Meals cost .25, premiums ran from .50 to \$5.00.

This success encouraged the Association to still further improve the grounds and make preparations on a grander scale for the next year.



A 1900 scene at S. Main St. Entrance.

After the first year a second gate was opened on south Main Street, but not at the present location, further south. The entrance from Wellsboro Street became the exhibitors entrance. The Main Street entrance had a bridge across the cove.

In 1880 the attendance reached over ten thousand people on the second day. Total receipts were \$2500.00 dollars. Single admission tickets were fifteen cents. Children under 10 were admitted free. All carriages or other vehicles driven onto the grounds were charged twenty-five cents for each admission, in addition to the fees paid by the occupants. Each exhibitor was given a ticket, not transferable, entitling him or her to enter all articles for exhibit. The 1881 (third year) premium list required all tickets of admission to be purchased from the treasurer. No gate keeper was allowed to take money. This required everyone to stop at the windows of the gatehouse. However at a later date ticket sellers were out in front of the gate as well as at the windows. So great was the congestion at the gate when the trains arrived that the Fair Association sent Prof. Retan to Arnot on the evening train to sell admission tickets to the people before they came to Mansfield. The Association must have set up a system following this for most every one from the trains seemed to have tickets and went straight to the gate from the train. 1200 tickets were sold on one train from Blossburg.

Among the tickets we have dated 1881, 1882 and 1883 is one SEASON TICKET FOR HORSE. It bears the date of September 26, 27, & 28, 1883. Admit — and signed by Mart King, Pres. Since season tickets were one dollar

we assume it cost one dollar and allowed the holder to drive in and out of the grounds as many times as he wished. Complimentary season passes were also issued for the Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair according to a ticket issued for the Fifth Annual Exhibition, 1883.

The Ladies of Mansfield decided early following the first Fair that they needed a ladies building and set out to raise the money for it. Editor W. A. Rowland, publisher of the Mansfield Advertiser gave the following report of the ladies activities in the December 3, 1879 issue.

"The second of a series of 'Dime Entertainments' by the Women's Branch of the Smythe Park Association was given at Union Hall on Thursday evening. It was very successful, gave satisfaction and the house was crowded. We supposed it was to be a repetition of the first, but the programme was nearly an entire change. 'The Skidmore Guides', a piece of Ethiopian Extravaganza, was well done and brought down the house; while the burlesque 'Getting his Photograph' was a side splitter. There was some very fine singing, recitation, tableaux, and the impressive services of unveiling of a monument to Eve - indeed two monuments. The committee, or rather the portion of the committee, who did the work are entitled to much praise. It involved much labor, but they did it well and are entitled to the thanks of the Association. Somewhere about eighty dollars have been added to the fund by these two entertainments. In the order of progression and according to the rules of the society, we believe, new officers have been elected to whom is committed the task of engineering the entertainment for the present month, and we have no



Ladies check the progress.

doubt that the high character of those already given will be fully maintained. The enterprise is worthy and we are pleased to see the lively interest manifested in its success.

The fund continued to grow and the Ladies Pavilion was built at a cost of \$1150 and opened to the public in 1880, at the second fair. It was located east of the north end of the grandstand. The building was used the last time for the exhibits of the Mansfield Centennial celebration, July 4 and 5, 1957.

The Ladies Pavilion was under the control of the Ladies and during the first few years they operated each department with committees. Later premium list showed a Superintendent and assistant in charge of the building with superintendents at the head of each department.



Ladies Pavilion - 1880

In 1881 ladies listed were Superintendent of building Mrs. Philip Williams and F. D. Jones.

Art - H. W. Williams, Wellsboro; S. B. Elliott, Arnot; L. H. Shattuck, Blossburg. Domestic Manufacture - Mrs. J. P. Morris, Mrs. V. R. Pratt, and Mrs. M. L. Clark, all of Mansfield.

Needlework - Mrs. T. H. Bailey, Mrs. J. E. Rose, Miss Flora Kingsley, Mansfield.

Flowers - Mrs. John Dilliston, Tioga; Mrs. J. C. Bennett, Covington; Mrs. Carrie Radeker, Lawrenceville.

Unclassified articles (Gentlemen) - C. V. Elliott, E. R. Becker, J. W. Adams, Mansfield.

Unclassified articles (Ladies) - Mrs. C. V. Elliott, Mrs E. R. Becker, Mrs J. W. Adams, Mansfield.

The ladies of Mansfield continued a fine tradition of excellence in the articles that were displayed at the Ladies Pavilion. Each lady who served as superintendent seemed to remain at that position several years. The following were listed in the premium list over a period from 1924 thru 1941.



Judging Carriage Horses

General Superintendent - Mrs. L. D. Goodspeed

Art - Mrs. N. M. Beach

Needle Work - Mrs. Helen Neal

Culinary Dept. - Mrs. H. E. Cunningham

Childrens Dept. - Mrs. Janet Jerald, 1918 - 1941

Domestic Mfg. - Mrs. Eugene N. Bentley, 1918 - 1933

Mrs. Elsie Landon

The ladies also stepped in to help in other areas. Mrs. W. A. Davey was superintendent of the Farm Implement, Carriages and Machinery, and of the Farm Produce in 1941. Mr. Davey had been superintendent of these since 1913 or before.



Flower tent and crowd near front entrance.

Some of the ladies who have served as superintendent of the Ladies Pavilion are Mrs. Philip Williams, Mrs. James E. Mathews, Mrs. William Curtis, Mrs. N. M. Beach, Mrs. Kate Bureson, Mrs. L. D. Goodspeed, Lorena Sherwood.

William C. Crossley was superintendent of the Plants and Flowers for many years, serving longer than anyone else. The premium lists from 1913 through 1941 show that Mr. Crossley was the only superintendent for that department. Flowers were originally a section under the ladies department and may have operated as such until early 1900 when William and Robert Crossley enlarged the greenhouses from those operated by Mrs. S. B. Elliott.

The flowers were displayed in a large tent on the park. This tent was usually located near the main entrance or near the Main building, as we recall.

There were two or three raised flower beds on the park and these were always full of beautiful flowers and plants at Fair time. One had a small fountain, one larger one was in front of the Main building. We believe arranging these was also the responsibility of Mr. Crossley.

The park water supply was from a number of driven wells in various locations on the grounds. The Mansfield Water Company was organized and started operation in 1890. By 1893 water was extended to the grounds and buildings of Smythe Park.

The Mansfield Electric Company brought electric power to Mansfield in 1897. Soon after that date the electric lights extended to the buildings and grounds on the park. Among those who have wired and rewired to meet the needs of the concessionaires were George Seckinger, George Dyer and Doug Dartt.

The economy created by the Fair was felt outside of Mansfield. In 1908, the West Sullivan creamery was converted into a modern cider mill, with a capacity of 100 barrels per day.

O. A. Smith, advertised that parties wishing cider made before the fair should telephone the mill. After the fair it was noted the mill would operate every day. (Mansfield Advertiser, Sept. 1908.)



*The dining hall as it appeared in 1970.
Standing by the building is Hallock Colony.*

RAILROAD EXCURSIONS

The railroad played a major role in making the Fair a great Fair.

The Corning to Blossburg railroad came through Mansfield in 1840 for the purpose of carrying coal from the mines of the Blossburg area. It was called the "Fallbrook", locally. In 1881 the schedule in the Fair Premium list it was called the Tioga and State Line Railroad and in 1898 its schedules noted the Tioga Branch of the Erie Railroad. Its main line was from Elmira to Lawrenceville to Blossburg.

"The first railroad was laid with what was known as strap rails. Stringers were laid across ties, and lengths of rail spiked to the stringers. Sometimes the rails would get loose and the ends which were called 'Snake heads' would come up through the cars, resulting in the narrow escape of the passengers. They were called 'brake keels'." (From Harry B. Taylor's memoirs.)

Many people who had the railroad cutting across their property got free passes to ride the cars. One Richmond Township land owner received a life pass. Asa Mann sold a 100 foot right of way, which made room for the station and switch tracks.

Many along the railroad rode the "cars". It was quite common to ride the train from Mansfield and enjoy an excursion to Park Hill in Tioga or spend the day at Lawrenceville. Out of towners came to the "Island" in Mansfield. The road bed in 1877 had three tracks of light T rails known as standard and Broad tread. The broad tread (3rd) rail was torn up in 1885.

The railroad got involved with the Fair from the very start. It carried all exhibits from New York State to and from the Fair free of charge. They increased the number of excursion trains and for many years carried all the



The Stadel Amusement Company Merry-go-round, 1920.

midway equipment, concessions, rides, etc. A new siding was added in the station area, with cattle pens, to switch cars unloading for the fair. Three car loads of cattle came the first time in 1880. In 1881 nine thousand tickets for the Fair were sold on the trains.

The Stadel Amusement Company Merry-go-round came in a single baggage car which sat on the siding at the station during the Fair. Hallock Colony recalled helping to unload and load the Merry-go-round, and they did it in three days, including setting it up and removing it from the park.

The railroad ran one special train every day of the Fair but on the big day, usually Thursday, ran as many as four excursion trains, two from Morris Run, Blossburg and Arnot; one from Cowanesque Valley and Corning area and one from Elmira. These were in addition to the regular passenger, freight and mail trains.

The trains carried thousands of people eight to ten coaches to each train, usually filled to capacity. One train from Blossburg carried 1200 ticket holders. Children under 10 were free. In those days it was a family affair no one stayed home with the children.

Besides the trains there were all sorts of horse drawn vehicles coming into Mansfield in a steady stream on all roads and going out again from 4 to 6 p.m.

In dry weather the dust raised by the horse drawn vehicles was a sight well remembered by those living on the surrounding hills.

Mrs. Louise Thompson remembered, Mrs. Morris sprinkling the Ore Bed Road by the "Wrens Nest" to help keep the dust down.

If you did not get to the park early there was always a traffic jam on Main Street as all the trains stopped in front of the gate to let off the passengers. They also pulled up there again to take on their passengers in the afternoon.



Waiting for the excursion train to unload. S. Main Street.

All the horse barns and stable spaces in town were always full during Fair Week. Many people in town would rent out stalls months in advance to those who did not like to leave their horses on the park. Anyone who had a room to let usually rented to the fair people. Some rooming houses had regular fair customers year after year. The hotels were always full.

In the early 1900's two draymen with good size, horse drawn, coaches must have had a good business during the Mansfield Fair Week transferring passengers from the New York Central station on the west side of Tioga to the Erie on the east side. Both Anthony Addison and John Carlson owned and operated coaches in that period. The Erie schedule noted connections with New York Central at Tioga and Lawrenceville.



L. Hichcock Dray and Horse drawn taxi at the Erie Station.

BOROUGH COUNCIL ACTIVITIES

Mansfield entered into a growth period in the 1870's and the exposure the Fair was creating certainly was a favorable impulse for that growth. The Borough limit was enlarged in 1873 and the Normal School enlarged North Hall at a cost of \$85,000. Nine new homes were built on Brooklyn Street. Growth throughout the Borough continued into the 1880's.

A 10 mil tax was levied in 1880, five mils was for road improvement and extensions. On South Main Street from Normal Ave, (now College Ave.) to the railroad crossing was a steep hill with a drainage ditch that drained the areas of the south east section of the Borough crossing Main Street and entering the river just north of the present gate house. This ditch was crossed by a wooden bridge and also by a sidewalk built on stilts. The hill was cut down, the stream put underground and the street leveled to the grade of the railroad. Smythe Park Association moved their main gate to its present location on Main street. The new gate had a bridge over the cove to the Island. This entrance made it more convenient for all to enter the park. The trains began to unload here also.

There seemed to be a special relationship between the Borough Council and the Smythe Park Association from the very beginning. Probably because so many of the borough residents were involved through the churches, the social and fraternal organizations, the number of individuals who became involved as volunteers or were temporarily employed by the fair. Much of this was due to Mart King.

More accurate records of the Borough's activities during the Fair were found in the minutes of 1885 when Mart King became Borough Secretary. He was elected Justice of the Peace that same year in February.



New gate bridged the Cove - 1880's



Tents housed farm implements, carriages and machinery - 1900.

Police work was the biggest expense of the Mansfield Council during fair week.

October 4, 1886 records show that Dan Fitzgerald was paid \$20 as chief. H. C. Bailey, C. M. Comfort, Joe Dietkere, J. M. Robbins were each paid \$8.00 for working 4 days. J. F. Howe and team was paid \$11.25 for road work and other services during the fair. In 1887 the Council appointed police to serve during the ninth exhibition of the Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair. The salary was set at \$2.00 per day and each was sworn in by Justice of Peace Mart King. A day was considered to be 10 hours.

This practice continued for several years during 1880-1890. Some of the names of the policemen changed, but Dan Fitzgerald who apparently served as police officer at other times also, usually got \$10 where the others received \$8.00. During some years the men only worked one or two days. Rainy weather on those weeks cut down the Fair activities.

On February 17, 1886 the Council passed its first peddling ordinance. The need according to some was to raise money for the borough. But by that time the fair was starting to overflow the grounds and some control was needed on the peddlers and others who were trying to avoid a fee required by the Smythe Park Association. The ordinance made it unlawful to set up a temporary booth or stand to sell or offer for sale at a lunch tent or stand or other temporary business, offering for sale cigars, food, drink, goods, wares, or merchandise of any kind within the Borough of Mansfield without first obtaining a license from the Burgess. It also listed concerts, exhibits or shows of any kind, jugglers, public auction, etc. in a public hall without first obtaining a license.

The law also made it unlawful to open any hall or room or other public place for a public dance or other amusement within the Borough of Mansfield during the time of the Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair or during any general celebration without a license. A license cost \$5.00. The fine set was \$25.00.

Of course the ordinance did not go over very well with the local groups and its first test came from the firemen who were holding dances in Union Hall to raise money for uniforms for its members. Someone paid for a license but the money did not come from their treasury.

Changes made on the grounds by the Park Association following the flood of 1889 probably helped the situation by making more room available. Just outside of the front gate on Main Street, in the area now the site of Mr. Donut, was a favorite spot for grape and peach peddlers from the Lake Country of New York State. Many fair goers bought fruit here. They could be counted on arriving on the last two days of the Fair.

Bryon J. Costley, a lawyer, became Borough Secretary, taking over from Mart King, in 1890. In 1895 a new peddling ordinance replaced the previous one. It required licenses for hawkers, peddlers and transient canvassers. No reference was made to the Fair. Lawyer Frank Clark was then serving as secretary and Justice of the Peace.

On October 14, 1895 J. A. Elliott, Secretary of the Smythe Park Association appeared before Council and asked that the Borough taxes levied against the Association or upon the Park property be abated. There upon it was moved by Councilman Strait (George J.) seconded by Tom W. Judge and carried that the regular \$11.25 and special \$11.25 borough taxes levied upon the Smythe Park Association for the year 1895 be abated. (H. E. Metcalf and J. H. Howe not present.)



Judging Cattle - 1900's.

CHURCHES and OTHER ORGANIZATIONS

Reverend Emma Bailey was pastor of the First Universalist Church at Mansfield from 1881 to 1887 and served here again 1890 to 1895. The Universalist Church was located at the corner of N. Main and Elmira streets. They had purchased the First Methodist Church building after the Methodist built their new building on the corner of Wellsboro and Academy streets, in 1871.

In her diary of 1883 she wrote, "After service we decided to give meals in our vestry during the four days of the Great Fair held here in our beautiful Park every year, when thousands of people come to town. What work and generosity it means but we shall equal it, me thinks".

All churches in the area found ways of working and serving during the Fair. Many had booths on the grounds. There was an area under the north end of the new grandstand, built in 1902, where one or more church booths were located.

Members of the Temperance movement usually had a booth on the park.

One point that many reporters noted about the Mansfield Fair was the cleanliness and absence of drunks. Although one of the complaints heard most frequently by the Council was about drunks on the street. Mansfield was a dry town, having voted in 1873 against a license to sell alcoholic drinks.

During the prohibition days one fair time two enterprising young men set themselves up to sell booze. They circulated the information that it was available under the grandstand. However in order to obtain a bottle, one must swear not to tell anyone about it. They sold out and left the grounds before most of the buyers became aware of the fact they had paid a good price for tea in whiskey bottles.

There were a number of organizations that made good use of the Fair to improve their contact with the public and get memberships.

The Red Men had an active lodge for a number of years in Mansfield. Their lodge hall was located on North Main Street where McDonalds is now located.



Grange and Produce Buildings.



Red Men's Float ready for Parade.

On September 3, 1908 they held a county-wide picnic on Smythe Park with a parade at noon. The Mansfield Military Band led the parade. They always held dances in their hall during the fair. At times they showed movies to raise money. They advertised by displays on the park with signs mounted on wagons, etc.

The Grange was a strong supporter of the Mansfield Fair. The Mansfield Tioga Valley Grange was active throughout the period of the fair. In September 1890, Tioga Valley Grange, No. 918 won the prize of \$25.00 for best display at the fair.

The Mansfield Grange Hall on Wellsboro Street was built in 1917 and immediately became a center for community affairs. Dances were common during the fair and at times they served meals.

A Grange building and a produce building were built in early 1920's. In 1928 eight Granges had exhibits which included Tioga Valley, Sullivan, Tioga, Mitchell Mills, Tioga Center, East Charleston, Covington and Charleston Valley.

The Odd Fellows Lodge (I00F) were also active during the Fair week and at one time fielded a fine baseball team.

In 1928 the Odd Fellows tent was much enjoyed at the Fair. The Advertiser gave this account.

"The Mansfield Odd Fellows Lodge No. 526 had a tent near the Mansfield Advertiser tent where the members and their families could rest and visit at the Fair. It was furnished with chairs, table and book to register names and the lodge to which they belonged. Two hundred and twenty-five signed in. Odd Fellows and Rebekahs registered from New York, Ohio, Michigan and Pennsylvania. George Paris was general manager."

At a citizens meeting held in Union Hall, June 9, 1885 it was decided to celebrate the Fourth of July in Mansfield. Smythe Park Association announced that Smythe Park will be thrown open on the Fourth, delightful picnic grounds available.

A chopping match was one of the featured events announced as part of the celebration.



Demonstrating a Westinghouse Engine and Thresher.

This type was sold by G. W. and L. M. Palmer in Rutland, in the early 1900's

1889 FLOOD

1889 was the year of the big flood and much damage was done both in the Park and in the Borough.

The park was a lake. The flood occurred on May 30 and June 1. There had been a week of steady rain followed by a cloudburst early in the evening. It swept away the dining room and its contents. It did considerable damage to the railroad and changed the course of the river in several places. The river bridge was washed out.

Charles Redfield gave this account of the June flood of 1889.

“The Smythe Park Association has always been conducted on a sound business principle. It has always paid all indebtedness it ever contracted. It has sometimes had uphill work to keep afloat, like the time of the June flood of '89, when they were pretty well 'cleaned out', but those old stockholders of the organization were made of the right kind of materials, and went to work with a will and soon had the 'old mud hole' in good condition. The Railroad Company gravel train drew gravel for days to fill in between the railroad and the Main building with ninety teams, together with students from both the Normal and the Orphans School and half the citizens around Mansfield, all working like beavers, and hard work and good management accomplished wonders”.

Another author writing about the flood of June '89 said,

“There was a washout by the Tioga River along the railroad north of the location of the Gate House which caused an engine of the Erie Railroad to tumble into the river at that place. The flood also caused considerable



The Terrace with steps.



Stock Parade of 1900.



Every animal had an attendant.



On the big day.



Owners show off their ribbons.

damage to the Park and dropped tons of stones and gravel which was cleaned up”.

The concern that people would think there could be no Fair because of the damage prompted the Smythe Park Association to make the following announcement in the Mansfield Advertiser of June 3, 1889.

“The Mansfield Fair will be held as usual this year. Work has already begun on the grounds and buildings, which are not as badly torn up as first reported. By July 1st no trace of the flood will remain. The grounds will not only be restored but considerably improved. The Premium list is nearly ready”.

The boys at the Advertiser must have liked that news for they always printed the Fair book and tickets. It meant work for several weeks, in addition to the newspaper.

Among the changes that were made were to take advantage of the river change and its filling in the old cove. They placed the creek under ground and made a new entrance gate. Improvements were made to the grandstand, dining room, new exhibition building, band stand and the purchase of some land. By 1900 a new track was made enlarging it to a full half mile. Many other improvements followed and it paid off in an increase in attendance with 20,000 on Thursday, the big day, and an average attendance of 40,000 per Fair for many years.

Perhaps the most striking change made in many years was the conversion of the old, rather unsightly bank north of the track into a three tier terrace with concrete steps leading to the stock yard.

FREE ATTRACTIONS

We are sure many people came to the Fair annually to meet their friends and relatives as a standard advertisement in every premium list suggested.

Your Sister, Your Cousins, Your Aunts,
Your Sweethearts, and All Your Friends
Will be at the
GREAT
MANSFIELD
FAIR
And if you want to see them its up to
You to don your best bib and tucker
and come along.
They never miss it for it's
OLD HOME WEEK

But many came to see the stock, farm produce, exhibits, and new items on the market, the special events or, at later Fairs, the free attractions. No mention was made of attractions in the early Fairs, but there were events for the ladies and men, such as horseback riding, chopping contests, best yoke of oxen and best pair of carriage horses.

Frederica Allen (Mrs. George A. Clark) and Vine Odell (Mrs. Web Cleveland) always got the prize for horseback riding. Bryon Robbins got the prize for being the fastest chopper, Asa Cleveland for oxen, J. M. Clark for the best pair of carriage horses. (H.A. Taylor, Memoirs)

Later Free Attractions were advertised in the premium list. The free attractions were acts that during the winter season played the vaudeville circuit and



Tight wire act.



Crowd of 1890 watch the attractions.

special tour performances. Acts such as: The Five Troupe - one of the best companies of acrobats in the world. Two International Dancers; The Great Hay Wagon Act - given the previous winter in the New York Hippodrome; Tight Wire Acts; Sensational Bicycle Acts; Ladue and Henry - The Organ Grinder and Acrobatic Monkey; The Educated Horse - sat in a chair and answered questions and could count; The skating bear and the Russian bear acts; The Dog acts with one that was a "cut up". The Animal Acts were always popular and there were always band concerts and baseball.

However there were two special attractions that were out of the ordinary events for fairs of that time.

FIRST NIGHT GAME

In the spring of 1891, Professor John Edwards proposed that Mansfield Normal School have a football team. Professor Edwards was a lover of sports and a recent graduate of LaFayette College, where the game already was popular. Encouraged by the enthusiasm which greeted the suggestion, Professor Edwards called the interested men of the school together and launched on Smythe Park what was to be the first spring football practice in the United States. The team played three games that fall. One was played with Wellsboro, winning 8 to 0. Two were played against Elmira Athletic Club with the Normal School winning one 11 to 0 and losing the other 6 to 4.

In 1892, even though Professor Edwards was not at the school, the boys carried on with about the same group composing the team. The highlight of the season was a game with Wyoming Seminary at Smythe Park on September 29, Wednesday evening of the Mansfield Fair. This game has been proven to have been the first night game of football under lights in the country. For this event, a special lighting system was installed - 20 electric lights of 2,000 candle power and several incandescent lights of 30 candle power operated by a Thompson and Huston dynamo. Even though they wore white uniforms it was not satisfactory and the game was stopped at the half time with neither team having scored.



Monument to first night game on Smythe Park.

The second special attraction occurred at the thirty-third annual fair on September 6, 1911. The following account is from the Mansfield Advertiser of September 11, 1911.

AVIATOR TONY CASTELLANE FALLS TO DEATH IN MANSFIELD

"On Friday afternoon last at 1:30, Tony Castellane, who came to Mansfield to make aeorplane flights as an extra special attraction of the Mansfield Fair, was killed. Having failed to make flights Wednesday and Thursday from a field in the vicinity of Smythe Park, by reason of the cross currents of air which



The aeroplane before flight at Thompson Farm.



The accident along present U.S. 6.

infest this valley, the aviator on Friday afternoon made a start from an elevation on the Thompson farm west of the Tioga river. His machine was in good condition, and all things persaged a successful exhibition. Castellane made a successful start, and went about 150 feet high, circled and proceeded in the direction of Smythe Park. When almost over the home of Eugene Doane, on the Hollow Road, half a mile west of town, the young aviator encountered a treacherous cross current. His aeroplane turned turtle.

"In falling to the ground the machine struck a tree, tearing off some of the larger limbs. The fatal landing was in the road in front of Mr. Doane's home. Ward Bailey and Fred Roundsville, were watching the flight from near where the accident happened, and were the first to reach the prostrate aviator. Mr. Doane, who was in the rear of his home, heard the crash, and soon joined them. They placed Castellane in a more comfortable position. He gasped twice, and all was over. Dr. F. G. Wood soon arrived, and declared the unfortunate man dead.

"A crowd soon gathered, and the dead aviator's manager and other friends who came with him to Mansfield, were accorded every possible aid in caring for the wrecked aeroplane, which was of the Curtiss type, and was built by Castellane. Dr. Wood conveyed the body in his motor car to the undertaking establishment of Rolason and Shaw, where it was prepared for burial. On Saturday afternoon, the local lodge of the Masons escorted the casket containing the dead aviator to the Erie Station for shipment to Brooklyn, N. Y. A goodly number of citizens also accompanied the body to the station.

"When aid reached Castellane, his feet were resting on the seat of the machine. Death probably was caused by the impact as his head struck a bank of the gutter at the roadside. His neck was broken. The aeroplane was a complete wreck.

"Mrs. Castellane, the widow of the aviator, was prostrated when she was informed of the accident, but later regained her composure, and accompanied the body to Brooklyn, their home city.

"Soon after the news of the accident reached the Fair grounds, a pail was placed over the main entrance, labeled, 'Help the Widow', and contributions were liberal. One thousand postcard photographs of the dead aviator were



Masons escort body to train.

sold quickly at the grandstand. The officers of Smythe Park Association did a square thing, and there was a general disposition to do something to help.

"The lurid reports of the accident, which were published broadcast, made good newspaper stories, but lacked the essential element, accuracy.

"Castellane's was the ninety fourth death as a result of aeroplane accidents. In the nine months of this year fifty-six aviators have been killed.

"Tony Castellane was born in Italy and was in his 29th year. He had been for two years connected with aviation, and during the last ten months had made many successful flights. Formerly he was a trick bicycle rider and it was during his career as such that he earned the sobriquet 'Dare-Devil'. He was a 3rd degree Mason, a Shriner, a member of the White Hats and the T.M.E. He is survived by his widow, five brothers and two sisters. One of the brothers was in Mansfield".

Smythe Park Officials at that time were John F. Pitts, President; Joseph S. Hoard, Vice-president; Ray C. Longbothum, Secretary; W. W. Allen, Treasurer and Trustees; Thu VanNess, E. H. Ross, Samuel B. McConnell; C. H. DeWitt. DeWitt was Superintendent of grounds.

Editor Edwin S. Coles told about an interesting free attraction when he was "the son of the editor of the Advertiser".

Pawnee Bill was the free attraction at the Fair and on Friday night they paid him a thousand or two thousand dollars in currency at the bank. He tied it in a sack, slung it over his shoulder, looked at his gun, and walked with it to his private car on the siding, which was behind the present gas company building.



Free attraction - balancing act 1890's.

EDITORS AND REPORTERS

"Editors of Public Journals, Reporters and officers of Agricultural Societies are invited to attend, and are respectfully requested to report at the business office of the Association on their arrival."

The above was the request printed in every premium list from the very first Fair of 1879. The stockholders and officers formed a good and lasting relationship with all the newspapers and journals over a wide section of Pennsylvania and southern New York state.

There was, for years, a row of tents, six or eight feet square, placed in a line along the south side of the Main building called "Newspaper Row". One free pass was given and the paper had a representative there every day.

My first Fair with the Advertiser was in 1929. Glenna Wilson, Charles Redfield and Edwin Coles, the boss, let me help.

Newspaper row, I was told, in times past had fourteen or more tents. You could always find representatives from the Tioga Argus, Wellsboro Agitator, Wellsboro Gazette, Elkland Journal, Westfield Free Press, Galeton Leader, Elmira Telegram, Corning Leader, Williamsport Grit, Troy Register, the Blossburg Herald and the Addison News, to name a few.

Many visitors would call at the Advertiser tent to be sure the editor or who ever happened to be there would get their name in next weeks paper. A subscription list was available so those who had formed a habit of paying their subscription at the Fair were accommodated. It was good to just visit friends and strangers. It was good for the newspaper people to know where every thing was, for you answered a lot of "where is" questions.

The Advertiser of October 13, 1920 carried this account of a State visitor. THINKS MANSFIELD FAIR ONE OF BEST IN STATE.

"C.E. Crothers, sent out by the State Department of Agriculture to visit fairs, finds Mansfield Fair and Grounds in very high order.

"Wednesday of Fair Week, C. E. Crothers of the Department of Agriculture who is visiting various fairs in the State, was in Mansfield and in the company of Frank Marvin, Secretary of the Smythe Park Association made a tour of inspection.

"Mr. Marvin conducted the state man over the grounds taking about three hours to visit the various booths and exhibits, buildings, etc.

"Mr. Crothers was well pleased with the Fair as shown in the following report which he turned in to the department.

"The Fair at Mansfield was one of the most successfully conducted, in my judgement, of any I attended. The grounds are not only large, but well kept, which indicated the profits which has accumulated have all been to upkeep and further improve the grounds and buildings. It is the only fair that I attended that does not have a race course. The live stock exhibit was good, stalls, stabling, etc. being in fine condition. The dairy barn particularly being worthy of mention, equipped with the most modern dairy improvements, stanchions, water supply and concrete floors. The exhibits of all livestock was high quality. In fact, I found everything pertaining to the fair and its management of High Order".

The Smythe Park Association board serving at that time were: Charles S. Ross, President; Joseph S. Hoard, vice-president; Frank H. Marvin, Secretary; W. W. Allen, Treasurer. Others on the board were Thu VanNess, R. E. Cleveland, N. M. Beach and C. H. DeWitt.

Lt. Gov. Beidelman, Harrisburg, on a visit to Mansfield Normal School in 1921 visited the Mansfield Fair. He stated that "the Fair was the best in the State". He was high in his praise of the agricultural features that were above average and was amazed that we had such wonderful grounds and such good buildings in so small a community.

As late as August 27, 1940 the Elmira Sunday Telegram had its correspondent Anne Baldwin Kayser write about the changing County Fairs.

"The oldest Fair in Northern Tier Pennsylvania and one of the most interesting of its kind to be held anywhere, The Mansfield Fair on Smythe park continues each year to attract crowds of spectators and visitors whose only contact with one another during the year is apt to be on this special occasion, a gay and festive reunion.

"Frank H. Marvin for many years secretary of the Association has witnessed the gradual change year after year of fairs. Changes in the form of transportation, higher cost and interests of the younger fair goers."



Fair Scene of 1900.



Fair Scene of 1900.

BASEBALL

Baseball was a part of the Mansfield Fair from the very beginning.

In the premium list of 1881, the third annual Fair, a baseball tournament was announced for amateurs only.

“The managers of the Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair to be held at Smythe Park commencing September 28, 1881 offers the following inducement to amateur baseball organizations throughout the County, to join in the tournament to be played on the grounds of the Association during the Fair. A cash prize of forty dollars to the winning club. The Association silver ball, won by the Mansfield club at the tournament of 1880 will be contested for, and given into the custody of the successful club to be held to the next year”.

How long this silver ball was in existence we do not know. We only know that in the early days all games were between teams in Tioga County, that no hired players were eligible. The competition between towns was always bitter and there was always money changing hands.



Game in the 1900's.

The Mansfield regulars who had won the tournament in 1880 continued to be the favorites. Players such as these made up the 1886 team; William Olney, Will Ide, Will Crossley, Will Goldmire, Will Osborne, Kirk Campbell, George Becker, Charles Parsons and Herb Goodall. Crossley and Goodall played in the Northwestern league with Wichita, Kansas.

Wellsboro, Blossburg and Morris Run always had good teams in the early days and usually has a good following.

In 1906 & '07 John Bailey played with the Mansfield Normal team. In 1910- '11 he played with Wichita, Kansas. He was a left hand pitcher.



Addition to grandstand helped in 1900.

Players on the 1911 Mansfield baseball team were Horace Roff, Harry Brace, Wade Judge, Bert Strait, Frank Bedink, Adam Hill, Fred Brace, Horace Beach, George Palmer.

There was for a time a very active Odd fellows team from the Mansfield Lodge IOOF No. 526.

The teams of 1922 - 23 were the years Francis Kelly and Alfred Todd, two outstanding high school players began to make themselves known. At the 1923 Mansfield Fair, on Wednesday it was Blossburg versus Westfield. Al Todd catching and Francis Kelly shortstop gave the Blossburg team the edge in an 11 to 2 win over Westfield.

On Thursday Todd played with Wellsboro and Kelly played with Tioga. The game had to be called after 15 innings 5 to 5.

Ball games could not start until after the free attractions, removal of the platform stage and preparing of the field for the game. This was usually after 2:00 o'clock; also remember it was late September.

At the Friday game played between Potter and Bradford County teams for the championship, Todd played for Towanda and Kelly played for Galeton. Towanda won 3 to 2.

Al Todd came to Mansfield from Morris Run to attend high school. He played basketball and baseball. Others on the 1922 - 23 high school baseball team with Todd were Reed Smith, Earl Mudge, Leo Allis, Harold Brace, Maurice Strange, George Clark and Francis Kelly.

Both Todd and Kelly got their start in baseball at Mansfield High School. Todd played on town teams for Mansfield, Blossburg and Tioga. He joined the Phillies and was sent to the Texas league. He was big and made a good target for pitchers. While in Texas playing against Dizzy Dean, Dizzy tried to move him back with a high inside pitch. Al told him if he threw another like that "I'll knock you off the mound." Dizzy did not hesitate and Al went to the mound and knocked him flat.



IOOF Team Lodge No. 526

*Back row-Robert Palmer, 2nd; Leon Baynes, cf; Lewis Hemmer, f; George Palmer, Mgr;
John Jaquish, f; Earl(Cristy)Wade, 1st; John Doane, ss; Lyman Hall, f.
Front-Glenn Gillett, 3rd; Charles Campbell, p; Ulna Goodall, c.& 1st;
Will Wheeler, p; Leonard Neal, c.*

I visited Todd in Cincinnati, O. but did not get to see him play against the Reds. He was catching the left hand pitchers and only right handers were used that game. He also played with the Pittsburgh Pirates.

While in Mansfield he lived in the home of a classmate of mine, Walter Doud (Carl Doud family).

Francis Kelly after playing on the Mansfield State Normal teams signed with the Philadelphia Athletics and played pro ball for several years.

Mansfield did not field a baseball team at the Fair after 1923. That year Mansfield lost to Tioga 2 to 3. Teams that were at the fair from 1923 to 1934 included Blossburg, Tioga, Galeton, Coudersport, Elkland, Wellsboro, Burlington, Troy, Lawrenceville, Morris Run, Knoxville, Columbia Cross Roads, Liberty, Jersey Shore, and from New York State, Addison, Elmira, Hornell, Hammondsport and Corning.

After 1934 Mansfield again fielded teams and were active in the Tri-County league. Francis Kelly player and manger.

Following the 1923 Mansfield Fair the Advertiser gave this account- "The Fair Association should be complemented on the character of baseball they gave the patrons this year. The crowd was reluctant to leave and it was late before the grounds were emptied. Friday night, many staying and making a last effort to get a blanket or bird or some other thing which they desired to take home to remember this greatest of all fairs, The Great Mansfield Fair."

It was pretty hard to get in to watch the ball games at the fair when I was in grade school. The crowd packed the fences along both sides of the field and the grandstand was always full.



The 1912 Baseball Team

*Standing-George Palmer, Amose Reese, Harry Brace, Herb Goodall,
J. Briggs, L. C. TenEyck, Horace Beach
Front-John Bailey, W. Haight, Baker, Fred Brace, Keefer.
Mascot not identified.*

There were always boys behind the grandstand waiting for a foul ball to come over. By returning it, they would let you in and sit next to the dugout. I had my turn. Older boys on top of the grandstand would give directions to help find balls among the cars.

There was a small grandstand with the baseball diamond directly in front of it at the beginning of the Fair in 1879. Even though bleachers may have been added (they were used later) this stand was too small. In 1900 an addition was made and at the same time the ball field was turned. This addition became the center section of the grandstand and in 1911 another 100 foot addition was added. This put the first section on the third base side and the new section along the first base side. The open bleacher section was on the south side extending from the west end of the grandstand.

The last time the grandstand was full to capacity was during the Mansfield Centennial in 1957. It was removed a few years later.



The Grandstand as it appeared in 1911, with bleachers.

THE BAND

There was always music at the Mansfield Fair. In fact there was always lots of music combined with lots of noise. If you were not a part of it one would think it was pretty noisy. There was the merry-go-round band organ music from morning to night. At times the beat of a tom-tom or base drum coming from a side show and animals and people added their share. Before the electric motors imagine the put-put of a number of gasoline engines, plus the ever present barker.

A band was organized in 1878, Fred M. Allen was its leader. It was called the Murphy Band in honor of Francis Murphy, the prohibitionist. C. E. Allen was drum major, according to H. B. Taylor.

In 1885 C. S. Ross joined the Mansfield Drum Corps and practiced daily, according to the Mansfield Advertiser.

In 1891 a band was organized by B. A. Strait. A community effort raised money for uniforms and instruments.

By 1914 Elmer B. Strait was directing the Mansfield Military Band. This band gave Friday night concerts on the square during the summer months. It was noted in the announcement that a hat would be passed as the band needed to buy music, new instruments and uniforms from time to time.

After the town band broke up, both town and student musicians from the schools were hired. During the 52nd annual Fair, September 17 - 20, 1930, the following made up the Fair Band.

Band director E. B. Strait, First assistant John F Myers
Trumpets-Frank Miller, Leonard Smith, John Isele, Lucille Lenker
Altos-Martha Gisten, Willet McCord
Clarinets-Robert Grant, George Wilson, Howard McCurdy,
Rexford Soper, Stacy Coles, Ross Knowlton
Basses-Don Roderick, Charles Hulslander
Piccolo-Vernon Schultz
Flute-Francis Lent
Bass drum & Cymbals-Waldo Seamans
Snare drum-Ward Wheeler
Trombones-Arthur Howe, Edward Capwell
Baritone-Frank Iorio

Among the directors have been Hack Swain, John Meyers and Bertram Francis.

Bertram Francis came to Mansfield in 1940. He followed John Meyers as director and used College musicians. Concerts were given in front of the grandstand and furnished music for the attraction acts as needed.

Many visiting bands made their appearances, among them, the Mansfield High School Band, the Grange Pomona Band of Tioga County, the Galeton High School Band, the Watrous All Girls Band and others.

Friday of the 1926 Fair was designated "Galeton Day". Featured was the Galeton Boys' Band and baseball team. The 50 piece band gave a concert in the morning, at the baseball game and following the game. A large delegation from Galton accompanied the two groups.

Prof. F. A. Allen reported that two brass bands have been organized at the Soldiers' Orphan School, "a set of instruments costing two hundred and eighty-five dollars, purchased, and the boys frequently discourse excellent music, to the evident delight of the villagers".

The report appeared in 1875. The Orphans were active in their support of the fair and community until 1889 when the school closed.

The Mansfield High School Band under the direction of Dr. John Baynes appeared three different days during the 1950 Fair. On Thursday, August 31 they gave a concert at 6:30 p.m. before the 7:30 Grandstand show. On Friday their concert was at 4:00 p.m. and on Saturday another evening concert at 6:30.

The 1950 Fair also featured the Fair Band under the direction of Bertram Francis. They gave a concert at 12:00 noon each day.

Also on Saturday, September 2, there was lots of music as the Grange Community Band of Tioga County gave a concert at 4:00 p.m. This band was under the direction of Waldo Seamans.



*MANSFIELD HIGH SCHOOL BAND - 1950
John Baynes, director; Richard Swinsick, drum major.*

THE FAIRS OF WORLD WAR 1

We cannot tell of the Fairs of 1917 and 1918 without first telling about Frank H. Marvin who became secretary of the Association in 1914.

Mr. Marvin was born in Covington in 1860, where he attended school and graduated from Mansfield Normal in 1902.

He owned and operated a meat business in Antrim for twenty-seven years. He was the Republican candidate for representative in May 19, 1914 election. He represented Tioga County in the State Assembly, serving from 1915-17, one term.

He was on the board of the Blossburg State Hospital for eight years. In 1932 he served as board chairman.

He married Jean Pollock of Antrim, who died in 1910.

Frank Marvin came to Mansfield in 1913 and occupied the house adjacent to the park; formerly the home of Dr. Henry Smythe. He was active in the Masons and Grange.

The Mansfield Fair had grown to where the Secretary could no longer look after the official business and the grounds as had been done in the past. The park was in continuous use by many groups and the Normal School used the athletic fields for baseball, football and field hockey. So many family reunion and organizations used the facilities that advance notice was required as pointed out by this ad which appeared in the Advertiser.

SMYTHE PARK RENUIONS-Persons wishing to use Smythe Park for reunions for 1918 should get dates for same to Supt. C. H. DeWitt.



*Reunion of Mansfield Orphan School decents and former members
Smythe Park - 1900*

Calvin H. DeWitt was a farmer from Sullivan Township, he moved into Mansfield in 1908 or 09. He was superintendent of grounds in 1913, perhaps before. He continued in that capacity to at least 1921.

Frank Marvin joined the Park Board in 1914 and became secretary. He served continuously to 1942, a period of twenty-eight years. He was the guiding hand of the association from before World War I to World War II.

During those years he saw changes in transportation, entertainment and carried the Fair through the difficult years of 1917 and 1918.

It was announced by the Erie Railroad in early September, 1918 that some changes would be made in the excursion trains on Thursday, September 19 of the Fair and a time table was issued. "Trains will leave Elmira at 8:00 a.m. will not stop at Trowbridge, nor make the run to Lawrenceville. To arrive Mansfield 10:00 a.m.

"Returning this train will leave the Fair grounds at 4:30 p.m. making Lawrenceville on this trip to arrive there at 5:30 p.m. for N.Y.C. connections.

"Special to leave Morris Run at 8:00 a.m. Blossburg 8:15 and run to Mansfield without intermediate stops.

"Returning this train leaves Mansfield Fair grounds at 6:00 p.m. making all stops running to Morris Run and Arnot.

"Special train leaves Hoytville 7:30 a.m. making all stops except Blossburg. (This train made pick-ups at Covington and Canoe Camp).

"Returning this train to leave Mansfield Fair grounds at 5:00 p.m."

On Friday the 20th similar trains were scheduled, except the Hoytville and Arnot train was eliminated.



Willys-Knights join the stock parade.

On September 14 the following telegram from Elmira was received by Mr. Marvin.

"Am just advised that it will be impossible to operate special trains for the Mansfield Fair. Signed J. H. Webster, Erie R. R."

There was some concern about war regulations but Mr. Marvin announced the following in the Mansfield Advertiser of September 4, 1918.

"There will be no increase in the Fair Association price this year. Since the Fair Association used earnings for improvements of grounds and not paying stockholders, they will not be required to collect war tax on admissions. All soldiers and sailors in uniform will be admitted free. The Association will give 5% of the gate receipt this year to the Red Cross and the Y.M.C.A."

A full program was planned including baseball, band concerts, free attractions and special exhibits.

One special exhibit was from the Navy. Under a tent furnished by the Fair Association was a large torpedo which created much interest. It was under the auspices of the U.S. Naval Information Bureau. It was billed as similar to the one that had destroyed the Lusitania, weight 1000 lbs. and was 13 feet long. Navy men and women were on duty to answer questions.

Another special exhibit was the product of a local industry, that was relatively new in the area. It had been brought to Mansfield by the Board of Trade. The following is the account from the Advertiser.

THE VAN GLECKLAND LIGHT.

"A beautiful flood of soft and delightful, yet brilliant light. The greatest measure of economy and a model of simplicity. It is a light that is always ready, just a match, turn a key and a light as bright as day. It is installed without tearing up the floor or cutting holes into the walls. The piping is simple, strong and safe. The fixtures are beautifully designed. The generator is a thing of perfection and one delights in its simplicity, just a tank of water, a hopper for carbide, a plunger to feed the carbide into the water, a weight to make the plunger work and to drive the gas through the pipes and a coil connection to connect the generator with the pipe. The light is a mantle burner affair and reduces the cost of lighting as compared with the old style acetylene light."

The company occupied the Paisley Shawl factory on S. Main Street, where Agway is now located. Mr. Brunswick Leonard was the accountant. Several local homes used the light while its popularity lasted.

The ladies found an interesting exhibit in the Baby Welfare tent and the men enjoyed the special produce exhibits. It had been a good year for corn.

A War stamps booth was manned by the Boy Scout Troop of G. A. Baldwin on the midway Thursday, which was a good day. However it rained on Friday and Saturday. It became so wet that the gates were opened and all who wished were admitted free.

A representative of the U.S. Food Administration set up a booth. A food expert from State College was in attendance to answer questions. It was noted that this exhibit was of interest to all patriotic people.

In an effort to encourage greater enthusiasm in the war garden and proper conservation of the produce raised, the National War Garden Commission ran a contest. Prizes in the amount \$10.00 were offered. Prize certificates were given for the best home canned vegetables grown in war gardens. With each certificate given were thrift stamps, each stamp book was worth \$2.00.

Entries were made at the Fair office and each person could enter at least five items.

All canned vegetables entered were displayed at the Food Administration Booth. Mrs. Edwin S. Coles was in charge of this project.

Following the fair the stockholders announced that they had not decided if a 1919 Fair would be held. (Late September).

Mansfield held an all day celebration following the news of the Armistice, November 11th. Dr. Will George Butler led the parade with a band made up of Normal School and Mansfield musicians.

On November 19, a special "called meeting" of the Smythe Park Association stockholders was held and it was announced immediately that there would be a Fair in 1919.

During the war Smythe Park had been used for drill and parade grounds for army trainees under the Mansfield Normal sponsorship. This was called S.A.T.C. (Student Army Training Corps) and was commanded by Captain Wilson. Lt. Warren L. Miller was one of the officers under Wilson.

The Fairs continued to draw excited crowds even though there was a gradual change taking place. The automobile was taking over the transportation of both horses and trains. However the railroad continued to offer special excursion tickets, both the Erie and the Penn division of the NYC, at a low excursion rate. Admission to the grounds remained the same - .25 single and \$1.00 for season ticket. The trustees offered special prizes for the best in their class of horses, cattle, sheep and swine. They also increased prize money for Grange exhibits.

The officers and trustees serving during this period were -

John F. Pitts - President

Joseph S. Hoard - Vice president

F. H. Marvin - Secretary

W. W. Allen - Treasurer

Trustees - Tru Van Ness, Ray Longbothum, C. W. DeWitt.

50th ANNIVERSARY

The 1928 Fair was the 50th anniversary of the Tioga County Agricultural, Mechanical and Industrial Fair (long ago renamed by every writer as the Great Mansfield Fair), September 19, 20, 21, 22. The first two days were poor weatherwise, but Friday and Saturday made up for it with both good weather and big crowds. There was also a large crowd on Thursday afternoon in spite of the weather.

According to the Mansfield Advertiser there were 384 persons who had attended the fair fifty years ago. One of them had attended in her mothers arms at the age of three months.

Better than average free attractions were shown and two interesting ball games played. Elkland beat Coudersport 4 to 0. Ingersol Rand beat Eclipse 5 to 4. There were fireworks Saturday night.

E. B. Strait's Mansfield Band made splendid music every day.

The ladies pavilion out-shown all exhibits. The Children's exhibits were given special attention. This department was under Mrs. Janet Z. Jerald, who had been superintendent of the department eleven years. When she took it there were forty exhibits, this year there were 130, the age of the children was under 14 years.

In the Main building was jewelry displayed by F. M. Jones of Columbus, Ohio. He had been attending the fair for a number of years and always hired Mrs. Elva Fralic and Mrs. Ingeborg Bailey.



*F. L. Jupenlaz display in the Main Building.
Ernest Jupenlaz, attendant.*



Claude Preston and team proudly display the new work harness made by Jupenz.

Also in the Main building were displays of:

T.W. Judge Co with Atwater Kent and Majestic radios.

G. L. Strait Hardware - washing machines, stoves, etc.

Farrer and Taylor Hardware - Heatrola stoves.

Kinney and Co. Elmira - Shoes

F. L. Jupenz - harness, trunks, robes, gloves and leather goods. -
Mansfield.

Doyle Marks Co. Elmira - musical instruments.

Winning Grange exhibits were:

1st - Tioga Valley Grange, Mansfield, George Paris, master.

2nd - Aurora Grange, Cherry Flats, Stewart Miller, master.

3rd - Covington Grange, E. H. Locey, master.



1922 auto show at the Fair.



New Park Gates.

In the Farm Produce building - Mansfield and Charleston High Schools had fine produce, poultry, etc.

Tioga Valley Mills, Canoe Camp, Franklin Bixby, prop. machinery display.

Charles McDowell, machinery.

The dining room reported good patronage, Able Asley was in charge.

Automobiles on display were - Fords, Cadillacs, Willys-Knights, Buicks, Chevrolets, Whippets, Oldsmobiles, Studebakers, Oaklands and Pontiacs.

There was more livestock than in previous years.

During this period the Smythe Park Association made many improvements to the existing buildings, grandstand and baseball field. The premium book of 1924 points out - "Here is one of the finest baseball diamonds in the Northern Tier of Pennsylvania or Southern New York. The grandstand has ample seating capacity for 2000 persons.

"The attractions in front of the grandstand each year are worth more than the price of admission."

Other improvements included a new entrance gate of red brick and iron. The horse barn was much improved. Entrances to each stall were made to the outside of the building in addition to the one from inside the building. A new modern dairy barn was also built.

INTO THE 30's

New Members joined the Smythe Park Association board in 1930. Percy Coles became President

R. E. Cleveland - vice president

F. H. Marvin - secretary

W.W. Allen - treasurer

Trustees - M. L. Wilcox, George E. Dyer, H.G. Peterson, Charles Ross.

The Erie Railroad withdrew its special train service to the Mansfield Fair in 1922 and by 1930 they were cutting back on regular passenger service. The automobile had taken over.

By coincidence, in 1922 the Mansfield Fair featured an automobile show. It included the regular lines sold locally, among which were the Reo, Durant and Star by Reinwald Brothers of Wellsboro. The Hudson and Essex shown by Canton exhibitor; the Durant, Willys-Knight and Overland by Fessler of Covington; the Buick and Durant by Otis Evans of Wellsboro. Mansfield dealers included the Willys-Knight, Durant, Overland and Star by M. V. Benson; Chalmers and Maxwell by W. H. Killgore and Son; the Lexington and Chevrolet by S. B. Bixby and the Liberty truck by the Mansfield Garage. All these cars attracted the usual amount of attention and especially the Star, which was the first of its kind to be shown in this locality.

The Fair reflected the changes in the economy. There were fewer sheep and swine, but the dairy cattle continued to hold its own.

The Association deeded a site for the National Guard armory in 1930. It stands today where the stock barns stood above the terraces. Tents were furnished for the live stock and later the horse barn was removed to make room for the garage area of the guards.



The Horse Barn had individual box stalls.

WORLD WAR II

At a special meeting early in August, 1942, the Board of Directors of the Smythe Park Association announced that they would not hold a Fair this year.

"Tire and gas rationing is likely to affect the attendance of those from a distance. Exhibits of merchandise are frozen or are under priority that would prevent any showing at the Fair. With farmers facing difficulties in getting help on the farm, they would be unable to bring any extensive exhibit of live stock, etc."

This would have been Mansfield's sixty-fourth Fair. Again Smythe Park became a part of the war effort.

The Billard Machine and Tool Co. of Covington used the Grange and Produce buildings to manufacture products under government contract. Other buildings were used for storage.

NEW BOARD

After World War II a new Park board was appointed in 1946. The old board had served through troublesome years and changing times. Plans were to renew the Mansfield Fair beginning in 1947.

President - Harry A. Taylor

Vice-President - Cyril Gibson

Secretary - Phillip Farrer

Treasurer - Thomas G. Harris

Trustees - Stephen S. Beach, Dean Davey, George Dyer.

The new board had its work cut out for it, but it worked hard. Gone were many of the contacts with shows and new ones would not play to small towns. They were faced with the problem of stock exhibitors that were down to the minimum.

But the Fair came back.

The attractions included radio stars; horse pulls were popular; the Grange had their usual fine exhibits and a premium list was developed.

Activities on opening day usually involved a children's costume parade and other activities in front of the grandstand.

A new portable stage was built for the special attractions. Webb Rice donated labor and equipment to build a midget baseball diamond and it was ready by Fair time.

In 1948 fire destroyed one of the buildings being used by Billard Machine and Tool Co. It was discovered that the old board had not maintained the fire insurance and that Billard Company did not have it covered. This caused "quite a stir on the board". Eventually a new cement block building was built.

That same year the Smythe Park Association donated the land on the northwest corner of the park for the Mansfield Memorial Swimming Pool. The pool was dedicated to the men and women both living and dead of Mansfield and vicinity who have served in the Armed Forces of the United States. It was officially opened August 5, 1949.

Directors were King Rose, president; Alfred Cleveland, vice-president; John Myers, treasurer; Bertram Francis, secretary; trustees Charles Curtis, Harry Rice, and Herbert Peterson.

The pool is directly behind the Agriculture building of the High School. The last remaining sheep and swine sheds were removed to make room for the pool. These had not been used in a number of years.

FAIRS OF THE 1950'S

The Fair of 1950 was one that many will remember.

George A. Hamid and Sons shows and rides were on the grounds. The special attractions were billed as special acts from the Steel Pier at Atlantic City. A kiddies' parade opened the Fair with the assistance of Elizabeth Allen, Margaret Knapp and Robert Messenger.

Tioga County Pomona Grange Band gave a concert. The Mansfield High School Marching Band made several appearances. Drum Major was Richard Swinswick who gave a fine exhibit of baton twirling in front of the grandstand. John Baynes was director.



Children's Day Parade in front of Grandstand - 1952.

WSM Nashville, Grand Ole Opry Star Hank Snow and others appeared on Friday night. There were baseball games and fireworks on Thursday and Saturday nights.

Some of the spirit of the Fair was dampened however, by the fact that the Mansfield Ambulance Company, National Guards had been ordered to Federal duty and left the Armory by special train and motor convoy for Camp Atterbury, Ind. with the 28th Division. Lt. Seymour Shaw was the commanding officer. They left during the fair.

The Fairs that followed included more local features, such as western style horse shows, antique car exhibits, midget baseball. The Auto Daredevils of Buddy Wagner and Joey Chittwood made regular appearances. FFA exhibits of cattle, sheep, swine and chickens were always good.

There were good crowds and the attendance reached 18,000 in the five days.

The 75th anniversary was observed in 1954. Admission was free to all 75 years old or older. In addition Mansfield merchants offered special prizes to those who registered at the Gate House.

A special exhibit was set up in the Ladies pavilion. This included bobby helmets and coats worn by the Park police, badges and ribbons worn by judges and officials in years past. Railroad posters advertising the excursions of 1906, old premium books, etc.

There were special attractions and two nights of fireworks.

The Fairs of 1955 and 1956 continued to attract good attendance. The George Hamid and Sons shows and rides were on the midway. The Fairs opened with the usual kiddies parade and attractions in front of the grandstand.

The dairy barn now crowded in between the Armory and the new High School building was sold and removed to Charleston Township. The Fair Association furnished tents for livestock on the fair grounds.

The Fair of August 31 - September 3, 1956 was four days and two nights. Outstanding attraction included WSM Grand Ole Opry star Jimmy Dickens and his Boys. Also Bob Cavanaugh and Dottie, the educated mare, plus two nights of fireworks. It turned out to be the last Fair.

In the meantime, the Mansfield School Board was having its problems with overcrowded conditions at its Roseville and Mainesburg elementary schools. The sixth grade at Mainesburg was being brought to Mansfield. The Junior High school building on the College campus could not be enlarged.

The School Board proposed a new Junior-Senior High School. In order to do this all of its present land would have to be used for the addition. The land available was the athletic field next to the river on Wellsboro Street.

The Smythe Park Association was also feeling pressure from another source. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers were pursuing their plans for flood control of the Tioga River. This would require about ten acres along the river for a dike. Also it would require building restrictions over the entire park and a pump station in case a flood caused water to pool on the park.

After much discussion a deal was finally made. The Smythe Park Association would sell its land to the School Board. A deed was signed the first day of August 1957 between Smythe Park Association and the Mansfield Borough School District for the sum of \$7000. President George E. Dyer and Secretary Phillip W. Farrer signed for the Fair Association.

The survey included all the land in the deed with Cordelia Smythe and that which had been purchased and added to that property as the Association enlarged the Park area through the years.

Later in 1957 the Association moved as follows:

Dissolution of the Smythe Park Association, a Corporation of the first class in the Court of Common Pleas of Tioga County, Pennsylvania, November 1957 and now the 6th December 1957, proof of Advertising of intent to dissolve Smythe Park Association, having been presented and the prayer of the petition heretofore filed may be granted without prejudice to the public welfare or the interest of the members of the Corporation.

Signed - Charles G. Webb.

GOING TO THE FAIR



The taffy tent.

“Hey, the taffy man is here.” That word would go around town almost by the time the taffy man had his tent up. Every kid in town that could, would go to see if it was true.

The arrival of Herrmann’s Coney Island tent on the Fair grounds signaled the coming of the Fair. Herrmann always arrived a week or two before any other outfit.

He enjoyed Mansfield and used it as his annual vacation from his Coney Island, New York stand. Usually he was the last to leave for he stored his equipment in one of the buildings until his return next year. He always hired several high school students as clerks.

It was fun to watch him pull taffy and when it was just right put it through the cutting and wrapping process. That’s when we would buy our favorite strawberry, still warm and soft enough to eat. They also had caramel popcorn pressed into small round cakes with five cakes to a package.

The Mansfield schools opened the first week of September and every kid knew how many days until the Fair. It was common practice to close school for Fair week. It was considered good work experience. But it was almost a necessity if the weather was hot and dry, for the sheep and swine sheds were along the boundary fence behind the high school and before the week ended the flies and smells seemed greater in the class rooms.

The High School Yearbook of 1928 tells it all-“We get out after a half day for the Fair”. In 1930 - “Hurrah for the Fair, our first school vacation”. In a college publication of 1933, “We plough through the mud of Smythe Park to ride the ferris wheel, the whip and the ocean wave at the annual fair”. The



The Pop stand - 1930's.

Carantawan of 1934 noted that the famous Mansfield Fair is graced by a few days of fair weather and the usual crowds appear on Smythe Park to try their luck at bingo and all the other amusements.

Most boys were on hand for the stock parade which was on the big day. I recall getting a chance to lead a big black horse. I was told to keep him out at arms length. But before long my arm relaxed and the horse crowded over and as he almost touched me with his nose, he stepped on the edge of my shoe pinning my foot to the ground by its sole. One look at that big foot so close to my little toe gave me lots of strength to keep him away.

When I worked at the Advertiser tent others of my classmates were working at booths where you threw baseballs or other games. Some even tried their skill at being a barker. Richard McConnell who worked part time for George "Hap" Meyers in the pop business, stayed in the pop stand all night to be sure no one broke in.

A picture postcard published in 1908 shows a side show sign which said, "See Leeta the Wild Girl". It was used to advertise the coming Fair of 1909. The cards were given out at the 4th of July celebration and noted the attendance last year was 40,000. It made me remember the "Wild Man from Borneo" at the fair about 1923. My grandmother was quite upset when she found out I had helped pull the rosined rope that was used to make the roar that was supposed to be coming from the Wild Man.

Apparently the Fair Association felt the same way about the fake as the show closed after two days.

To many people, the good old days were when they came to the Fair by horse and wagon.

Dora Dewey, a long time correspondent for the Mansfield Advertiser of the State Road Items wrote about her experience on going to the Fair.

"We got up a bit earlier on that eventful Thursday of the Fair and mother had two chickens all fried the day before and nice cream biscuits and all the rest packed in a big round cheese box. Father picked out a nice place



Best decorated - got silver cup.

on the bank in Smythe Park and we all helped and mother served. Oh what a good time we had.”

Another wrote, “What a thrill it was when Willard and I and another couple raced by horse and buggy to the Fair”.

“When I was 11 years old and lived in Dartt Settlement, Charleston Township, my parents took me to the Mansfield Fair. I saw my first airplane. It was on a hill this side (west) of Mansfield and we saw the airplane ascend just after noon and it crashed and of course the pilot was killed. As we drove by the scene where it crashed on our way home, people were picking up pieces of the wood for souvenirs. Of course it was all wood and a rather peculiar airplane to our way of thinking today. I also went to the fair in 1909 and saw the first automobile I ever saw. I was 9 and my niece was 5. We got our picture taken in it. My father took us in a democrat wagon and our food was in two baskets”. (Comments made by Luva Goodwin, Wellsboro, Pa.)

Joseph F. Gartland of Wellsboro writing about the postmasters in Mansfield in the period of 1880's said, “that it was during the term of M. L. Clark, postmaster, 1879 - 1886, that the Fair, Mansfield's principal claim to fame, next to her schools was organized. What one would give to recall but for an hour the youthful experiences during a trip to the Fair. The horse and buggy or the democrat wagon; the early start on the clear, frosty morning; the delightful drive over pleasant country roads; the joyous, happy day; and the ride home under the harvest moon with songs and laughter, the welcome lights of home gleaming through the silver moonlight with their warmth of peace and contentment.”

In the 1920's going to the Fair in an automobile was an added thrill. The few automobile owners had little trouble getting others to go along.

In Roseville according to Life in Roseville Fred Wilcox had a model T Ford, people would hire him to take them to Elmira or Mansfield or to the Fair.

From Life in Liberty, "You'd start out before day light, them old cars, they didn't go very fast, you'd get there, spend a few hours at the Fair and get back after dark".

Another from Liberty tells us "My folks drove the team to Morris to catch the train for the Mansfield Fair."

In the late 1920's and 1930's we remember the wrestling tent on the midway. The barker would issue a challenge to all comers to stay with his wrestler for a specified time. There was a period in that time frame that Jutt Garrison and another local called Farmer Smith would take all his money.

In 1954 the Fair Association announced that SKY-HI-LEE would be that opponent of McClarity in the pro-wrestling match scheduled for Friday night on Smythe Park.

George Dyer was the promoter for the Association and had secured a license in order to bring the pro's to the Fair grounds.

SKY-HI-LEE failed to appear at the Fair and as a result of action taken by the Smythe Park Association, the State Wrestling Commission banned him from wrestling in Pennsylvania.

One of the favorite items on the menu to the people eating at the dining room at the Fair was boiled ham and baked beans. Also usually during Fair week oysters were available. They came in a big wooden bucket and a chunk of ice floated on them to keep them cool and fresh.



Wheel of chance, 1910 - Win a doll 10 cents.

The dining room on the park was let out on bids as were other items which this classified ad indicated.

SMYTHE PARK PRIVILEGES

Sealed bids will be received up to noon on Saturday, June 13, 1885 at the office of the Secretary, for the grocery, dining room, and other privileges of Smythe Park for the present session. Specifications may be examined on application. Mart King, Secretary

Jack Bruce, who claimed to be the only man who could be buried alive for any length of time and survive was one of the features of the Mansfield Fair in 1934.

L. B. Shaw, Mansfield Undertaker, officiated at the burial which was held on the midway. The "Ironman" as Mr. Bruce was called, was buried five feet deep. He remained there for three days.

He was able to talk with friends on the grounds through a special loud speaker.

There was a time before the Food and Drug Act, that you could find a Medicine Man selling his famous snake oil. It would cure almost everything, especially back spasm, sprained ankle and ordinary aches and pains. Usually he had a good sized snake to help prove it was the real stuff.

As we remember there was always a large wheel of chance located near the center of the midway area. Here chances were sold on special items such as Indian blankets, pictures, dolls, birds in cages or any item that was the fad of the season. Tickets containing from one to three numbers were sold for .25. When enough tickets were sold the wheel spun and a number called. There was always a winner with each spin.

The first fence around the Fair grounds was made of logs and planks. This was seven or eight feet high. As time required it was replaced with a woven wire fence.



The Gatehouse 1988

There always seemed to be places to get onto the park behind houses on S. Main Street; a small gate behind the high school or along the river. During Fair time these places were closed but a few still found places to get in without paying. One way I was told was to duck under the railroad cars as they were unloading and just join the crowd. When all you had was .50 to spend it was hard to give any of it up to go through the gate.

The midway seemed to be always in the same place with lots of space in the center for the crowd. It had the usual side shows, games of chance and each year some new ones. You could always see the largest, the tallest, the smallest, the bearded lady, the strangest thing in the world- a seventh wonder and of course the largest snake ever known.

You would spend a whole day just looking at the exhibits and farm animals, including all those strange chickens and ducks.

The rides consisted of the merry-go-round, ferris wheel, whip, and chair plane. At first there were no small rides just for children but these came later.

Guess your weight and try to ring the bell with a sledge hammer were always around. When a man won he got a cigar - a lady got a box of candy.



National Guard Armory 1988

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The author wishes to thank the following for information, photographs and other help in making this story of the Mansfield Fair possible.

Hallock Colony - pictures from a collection by W. A. Bates

Douglas Dartt - Pictures and a copy of Memoires of H. A. Taylor

Mrs. Raymond VanNoy, Ernest Jupenlaz, John Baynes, Darwin Neal,

Shirley Ward - pictures

Mary Kingsley - for information of Mart King

Agnes M. Dyer - for information of the Smythe Family

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Tioga County Historical Society - Francis Kelly scrap books.

We thank John Colegrove of the Presssylvania Printer for work done with photos and negatives.



